

Frequently Asked Questions - 12/18/02

General Program Questions:

Q –When was Troops to Teachers created and who runs it?

A – Troops to Teachers (TTT) was established in 1994 as a Department of Defense program.

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000 transferred responsibility for program oversight and funding to the U.S. Department of Education but continued operation by the Department of Defense. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides for continuation of TTT through Fiscal Year (FY) 2006. TTT is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), Pensacola, Florida.

Q – What is purpose of the Troops to Teachers Program?

A- Reflecting the focus of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, TTT's primary objective is to help recruit quality teachers for K-12 schools that serve low-income families throughout America. TTT helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education and other high needs subject areas, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Q – Why should one register in the Troops to Teachers program?

A – TTT assists in several ways:

1. Pending availability of funds, financial assistance may be provided to eligible individuals as stipends up to \$5K to help pay for teacher certification costs or as bonuses of \$10K. Stipend and bonus recipients must agree to teach for three years in school locations that meet certain Department of Education criteria. The maximum amount of assistance is \$10K per person.
2. Twenty-eight states have Troops to Teachers State Placement Assistance offices in which we have representation at the state level, specifically to assist our participants.
3. Our database, which is a nationwide referral system, is made available to school districts for the purpose of recruiting new teachers.
4. School districts may post their vacancies directly on our Home Page.
5. Participants may research school districts' contacts and search for available academic or vocational teaching positions.
6. Participants may post a mini-resume, as well as citing key educational and experiential information. They may also use the TTT Electronic Bulletin to post TTT-related messages and use the Mentor Connection, which allows direct email communication with TTT mentors, i.e., past TTT participants who now teach.
7. TTT continues to pursue the goal of helping to relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education and other high needs subject areas, and to assist military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Q - How does the TTT phone system operate? A - Because of the number of calls,

certain TTT lines are often busy. This is a list of all available TTT telephone numbers:

DSN 922-1320	1-800-231-6242	850-452-1320
DSN 922-1151	1-800-231-6244	850-452-1151
DSN 922-1166	1-800-231-6282	850-452-1166
DSN 922-1230	1-800-452-6616	850-452-1230
DSN 922-1232	1-800-452-6617	850-452-1232
DSN 922-1233	1-800-452-6618	850-452-1233
DSN 922-1241	1-800-452-6619	850-452-1241
DSN 922-1242		850-452-1242
DSN 922-1243		850-452-1243

If the desired extension is unavailable, please leave a voicemail message that includes your name, phone number, and purpose of call. By the way, we are in the Central Time zone.

Q – Which specific extension should I dial for different kinds of questions?

Counseling Matters: Extensions 157, 117, or 163

Financial Issues: Extensions 154 or 162

General Program Info: Extension 161

Homepage/Internet Issues: Extension 163

Mini-Resume Postings: Extension 216

Registration Process: Extensions 148, 158, or 160

School/School District Staff: Extension 156

Eligibility Questions:

Q - Who is eligible to register in Troops to Teachers?

A – Active duty personnel, who retire or separate with six or more years of service on or after October 1, 1990, - or - current members of the Reserve or Guard with six or more years of creditable service towards retirement are eligible to register in TTT for Referral and Placement Services. Separated or retired (or about to retire) military personnel, as well as currently serving Reserve Component personnel with ten-plus years of creditable service are also eligible for funding. See

http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf for a complete discussion of eligibility criteria.

Q – I’ve heard there are some time windows for applying to the program. I don’t want to miss some important deadline or fail to meet some other eligibility criteria.

A - In short, several eligibility criteria are cited at

http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf. Some cite a specific date of first eligibility, and others, a deadline for registration. You will be able to identify the active duty or Reserve Component category in which you fit.

Q – Does my time in the inactive Reserve and the inactive National Guard count toward the program minimums?

A - No. The law stipulates that one's reserve time must have been in a drilling status to meet the RC-2 category. See the [Eligibility Criteria](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf) (http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf).

Q - I'm a retired reservist. I no longer drill and will not receive any retirement dollars until I reach age 60. Am I eligible to register for TTT?

A - Yes, so long as you are retired, you are eligible to register for TTT. See category RC-1 at the [eligibility criteria](#).

Q - I am a Vietnam era veteran now enrolled in a teacher certification program. Do I qualify for funding from the Troops to Teachers program?

A - The current legislation requires that you must be retired from active duty or the Reserve Component and have a bachelor's degree or the equivalent of one-year of college and 6 years of experience in a vocational/technical area. See the eligibility criteria at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf. If not retired but still a Vietnam era veteran, the only exception would be if you were accepted into Troops to Teachers under the original program, which ran from 1 Oct 90 through 30 Sept 99. In that case, you would already be "grandfathered" into the program.

Q - I have served in the active duty Army for the past 9 and 1/2 years. I am planning to separate in six months. Am I eligible?

A - The active duty member who has 6 years of service on or after January 8, 2002 and then commits to three years in a drilling Reserve Component becomes eligible for TTT financial aid. If you do not become a drilling reservist, you will still qualify for TTT's Referral and Placement Assistance because you have six years of service.

Q - I have 9 years as a drilling reservist. Am I eligible for TTT funding? As a reservist with nine years, you are eligible only for Referral and Placement Assistance. However, when you reach the ten-year mark, you could also make yourself eligible for a stipend or bonus by committing to an additional three years. Receipt of a stipend or bonus would also require that you commit to teach for three years in a district or schoolhouse that meets the required "high-need" definition.

Q - Is the Troops to Teachers program available to officers retiring with 20 or more years of active duty service?

A - The number of years is not the issue. Whether active or Reserve, the key criteria is that one be retired (regardless of the number of years) or meet one of the other [eligibility criteria](#). The retiring active duty group is probably the main focus of our program. Our motto is "Proud to Serve Again," and we encourage retiring military to consider teaching as a second career. Your experience and maturity makes you a valuable role model for the youth of America today. The program requires that you have a bachelor's degree or a minimum of one-year equivalent of college and 6 years of experience in a vocational/technical area. If you meet these requirements, financial assistance options are available, depending on your teaching area (high-need school, etc.) and fund availability.

Q - I retired in 1991 from the US Army and have an MA in Education and Teaching.

Do I qualify for entry into Troops to Teachers?

A – So long as your DD-214 specifies that you are retired, you are eligible.

Q - I am a retired officer and I teach JROTC at a public high school. Will I be able to apply for and use TTT funds to obtain a full teaching certification? Do I have to leave JROTC?

A – Yes, you may apply to TTT. If you then apply for and accept a stipend, you would be required to become certified and teach in an approved subject area for three years. Yes, you would have to leave JROTC.

Q - I was honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1993 and have received my bachelor's degree. I have 8 years 4 months time in service. Am I eligible to apply for funding under this program?

A – No. However, if you join a drilling guard or reserve unit, you may apply for the program when you reach 10 years of total service, as long as you commit to an additional three years in the drilling reserves and meet the education requirements for TTT.

Q - Does a six-year minimum service requirement for Troops to Teachers include the four years at a Service Academy?

A - No.

Q - I retired 1 Oct 95 from the Air Force. Am I still able to apply for the program?

A – Yes. There is no time limit.

Procedures for Registering in the Troops to Teachers Program

Q - Where should I send my TTT registration form?

A - The Troops to Teachers' home office at Saufley Field in Pensacola, Florida. The address is on the form.

Q - Where may I obtain a TTT registration form?

A - Most military education offices, our Internet Home Page (<http://www.proudtoserveagain.com>), call (800) 452-6619, or email the TTT home office (ttt@voled.doded.mil).

Q - Is there a time limit for applying to the program?

A – The application deadlines vary. Those with an approved retirement date may apply within one year of retirement. There is no time limit for those who have already retired. In other cases, consult the specific deadlines associated with the various criteria categories. See URL http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf.

Q - May a person submit a ‘copy’ of the application or must it be an original?

A - The applicant's original signature is required on the registration. Other than the signature, copies of documents are acceptable as long as they are legible.

Q - What other paperwork should I submit with the application?

A – All registrants must submit a copy of their retirement document, normally a DD-214 (Member Copy 4) or NGB-22 Form, as appropriate, as soon as it becomes available. Also a completed Teaching Subject Area Survey and a Vocational Technical Interest Survey. Include a copy of your college transcript reflecting highest degree received. (Transcripts should be submitted by the applicant, not forwarded to us by a college or university.) Depending upon one's category of eligibility, several other documents may be required. The registration form (http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/RegistrationForms.pdf) contains a complete list and description of all required documents.

Q - By submitting a signed application, am I obligating myself to anything?

A - No, however you are certifying that all the information on the application is true and correct. Simply registering in TTT carries no obligation. However, to receive TTT funds, you must agree to a three-year teaching obligation.

Q. I sent my registration form to TTT but was told that I forgot some supporting documents. What are the supporting documents?

A - The copy of the blank [Registration Package](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/RegistrationForms.pdf) that you downloaded from our homepage at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/RegistrationForms.pdf or received from TTT via U. S. Mail contains a page entitled, "Definitions of Supporting Documents Required to Register with the Troops to Teachers Program." Contact us at ttt@voled.doded.mil or via phone if you have additional questions.

Q – Must I request original documents from each source office?

A – No. However, we prefer that you mail clean legible copies rather than relying on FAX copies. FAX copies sometimes do not arrive. Additionally, they are often unreadable and create a paper management problem. Photocopies of college transcripts are also acceptable so long as the school's raised seal is readable. If not, please provide original transcripts.

Financial Questions:

Q - If I am eligible for a stipend, may I take my certification courses from a private school?

A - The school that you attend would have to be "accredited". In addition, the stipend money is provided to assist registrants in becoming certified to teach in a specific area after they have already earned a bachelor's degree or higher (or teach vocational subjects). Stipend recipients must agree to teach in a school in a high-need district. There is also bonus money available for those who agree to teach in a "high-need school".

Q - Is the financial assistance (stipend or bonus) a loan that must be repaid?

A – Both are one-time assistance. The stipends cover actual expenses incurred in becoming certified, up to \$5,000. Bonus awards can be as much as \$10,000. Bonuses are paid in three payments. In no case will the combined total of the stipend and bonus exceed \$10,000. Both stipends and bonuses are taxable.

Q - What kinds of expenses will the stipend reimburse?

A – We are allowed to reimburse expenses that incur after the date on which you are accepted into the TTT program. They must be directly related to a teacher certification program, or

be for courses leading to teacher certification or teaching endorsements leading to a current teacher's certification. Below is a list of eligible expenses:

1. Tuition – If you are working toward another degree while pursuing your teacher's license, include only those courses that are directly related to teacher certification.
2. Books and materials – for coursework only, not for student teaching. Computer and software are not eligible expenses.
3. Fees – Certification fees, testing fees, and fingerprinting, if it is required by the state.
4. Lodging for out-of-town seminars, testing and other certification requirements.
5. Child care
6. Transportation –36.5 cents per mile at this date (subject to change)

Ineligible expenses – *expenses that we may not reimburse* - **include** any expenses that were incurred prior to your eligibility date, computers, software, sports equipment, meals, or additional degrees that don't result in teacher certification. We are also not allowed to reimburse for certification or endorsements or endorsements in areas other than teaching, e.g., administration or counseling).

Q –Can you use the TTT financial assistance in addition to Pell Grant and/or GI Bill funding?

A – Yes.

Q - I will be awarded my bachelor's degree and retire simultaneously. Upon my retirement, I will be certified to teach. Will I be eligible for stipend money?

A – Only if you pursue an additional teacher certification that you do not hold. Based on fund availability, you would be eligible for bonus money if you choose to teach in a “high-need” school.

Q - I am in school but will retire before I receive my bachelor's degree. Am I eligible for financial assistance from TTT?

A – No. TTT funds may not be used to reimburse the costs of acquiring one's first baccalaureate degree. However, once you have received your bachelor's degree, you may apply for stipend funds up to \$5K to reimburse your post-baccalaureate costs of becoming a certified teacher. From that point, financial assistance will be based on fund availability. Keep in mind that many states do not require that vo-tech teachers have BA/BS degrees. Potential vo-tech teachers may apply to TTT a minimum of one year of college (30 semester hours), plus 6 years of vocational/technical experience.

Q - I sent my registration package. What happens now?

A –You will receive a letter confirming or denying your eligibility. If you are only eligible for Referral and Placement Services, that fact will be stated. If you are eligible to apply for a Stipend and/ or Bonus, an information sheet and application information will be in the

package. As you complete the steps in becoming certified, obtain a teaching position, and return the appropriate Stipend or Bonus packets, funds will be deposited to your account.

Questions about Becoming a Teacher:

Q - What if I'm not sure I want to be a teacher?

A - The best way to know for sure is to gain some practical experience. Volunteer in a public school at the grade level and in the subject area in which you want to teach.

Q - I have heard that a person has to be certified to teach. What does that mean?

A - Every state requires public school teachers to meet a set of educational standards. These standards vary from state to state. It is best to check with each state's department of education to get the specifics. Our Troops to Teachers State Offices can help you determine requirements in the states that they represent. See a complete office listing at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf. You will also find direct links to the states' certification offices at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/StateCertInfo.htm.

Q - Do substitute teachers have to be certified?

A - Some states require that substitute teachers be certified to teach, but most do not. Substituting allows the district to become aware of your teaching abilities and offers The individual the opportunity to become acquainted with the system.

Q - What are *starting* teachers paid?

A - In 2000, median K-12 salaries ranged from \$37,610 to \$42,080. The Occupational Outlook Handbook stated that the salaries of the lowest 10 percent ranged from \$23,320 to \$28,460, while the top 10 percent earned from \$57,590 to \$64,920. The American Teachers Federation cited an average beginning teacher salary in 1999-2000 of \$27,989. In some districts, veterans receive an automatic longevity pay boost when they are hired.

Teacher Certification Questions:

Q - I sent my registration package, and my eligibility has been confirmed. How will TTT help me become certified?

A - Certification or licensing is controlled by the individual states. We recommend that you deal directly to the individual office that controls certification for the state in which you wish to be certified. The TTT homepage contains a helpful list of certification contacts at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/StateCertInfo.htm. If your state of choice has a TTT state office, first consult with the contact in that office. TTT state office personnel are knowledgeable about overall certification requirements within their states. A complete list of TTT state offices may be viewed at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf. However, for reciprocity issues, you must address your questions directly to personnel in an individual state department of education office. Direct links to all of the state departments of education can be found at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/st-cert.htm.

Q - Is it a requirement to have a teaching certificate to get hired as a full time teacher?

A - Not necessarily. Many states have a certificate that is referred to as an “alternative teaching certificate” that can be issued to an individual based on the applicant's academic background and the state's immediate need to hire someone. Also, participants in many states can be hired as vocational/technical teachers based on their skill levels without having a current vocational/technical teaching certificate.

Q - What are the states that use the alternative teaching certificate most often?

A - AL, CA, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, NJ, SC, TN, TX

Q - What if the state in which I want to teach has no “alternative teaching certificate”?

A – You will be required to either complete an entire teacher preparation program in a college or university, or take a set of selected courses to meet your ‘deficiency’ in required academic areas.

Q - How do I find a teacher certification program?

A – In states with Troops to Teachers Placement Assistance Offices, contact the TTT POC and request a list of certification programs. In other states, contact the respective State Department of Education, Office of Certification. Depending upon where you plan to locate after leaving the military, check with a local college or university that offers teacher preparation courses. The topic of Alternative Certification is discussed in greater depth at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/altcert/tco.htm, which also contains a link to the [National Association for Alternative Certification](#).

Q - In what states can I find a Troops to Teachers Assistance Office?

A – AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, KY, LA, MD, ME, MI, MO, MS, MT, NJ, NC, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, and WI. Where no state TTT office exists, consult with the TTT office in neighboring states. A TTT state office listing may be found at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf.

NOTE: See our [Home Page](#) on the Internet for complete TTT information (<http://proudtoserveagain.com>) or call our offices at 1-800-452-6642/44/82 or 6616-19, or one of the many other numbers listed earlier.